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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

Monday, March 27, 1939.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "THE HOUSEWIFE AND THE BUREAU OF ANIMAL INDUSTRY." Information from the Bureau of Animal Industry, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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Our Washington reporter has taken us on several "get-acquainted" trips in the U.S. Department of Agriculture, as you may have noticed. Today's letter is about the Bureau of Animal Industry. I'll read what she says:

Breeding and raising cattle, sheep, or swine, keeping animal diseases out of the country, and enforcing Federal livestock laws and regulations may strike some of your audience of homemakers as wholly masculine activities, in which women have but little direct interest. But actually, the work of the Bureau of Animal Industry touches the home refrigerator or pantry in all parts of the United States. It plays its part in respect to the woolen coats we wear, the mohair upholstered chairs in our houses, and in the health of our families. Suppose I select some of the activities of this Bureau that illustrate what I mean.

"The Federal meat inspection work protects our food every day in some way, unless we eat only farm-slaughtered meats or meats sold wholly within a single State. If we buy canned corned beef or frankfurters from another State these foods have been passed by Federal meat inspectors before they entered into trade channels. However, I wrote you in detail several weeks ago about the little round purple stamp that says 'U.S. Inspected and Passed' and printed labels that contain the same text. I'll just remind you that Government inspection applies not only to fresh meats like steaks and roasts but also to cured and smoked meats, to canned meats and meat products, and to various other meat products like frankfurters, chili con carne, and scrapple.

"Meat investigations I found very interesting. Some of these studies have to do with the table quality of beef, lamb, and pork, when the previous history of the meat animal is known. The Bureau of Animal Industry has made a number of independent studies, and also done some investigations in cooperation with the Bureaus of Agricultural Economics and Home Economics and many of the State experiment stations. The object of these studies is to determine the factors in the production of the meat animals which influence the flavor, texture, and other qualities of the meat when it's eaten. The production men keep records of the breeding of each animal, its feed from birth, its sex, its age at slaughter, and other important points. Meat cuts from these animals are cooked by standard laboratory methods in the Bureau of Home Economics or by the various experiment stations, and are then judged for eating quality.

"Other angles of the meat investigations include studies of the effect of storage on cuts of lamb; problems in curing legs of lamb in much the same manner as hams are cured; desirable conformation of the animal for producing certain cuts; and curing and smoking turkeys. Housewives aren't likely to find cured lamb legs or smoked turkeys on the retail butcher's counter as yet, but farm families that have surplus lamb and turkeys want to know different ways to preserve the meat for

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future use.

"The poultry-husbandry work is of particular interest to almost every farm homemaker. Most farm women keep at least a few chickens and may have turkeys, ducks, or geese, as well. They're interested, therefore, in the best methods of managing flocks to obtain plenty of eggs and table poultry. I'll devote an entire news letter to the subject before long.

"Animal fibers studied by the bureau and cooperating State experiment stations are chiefly wool and mohair. One interesting field study is carried on in connection with the weaving of Navajo rugs and blankets. Specially bred sheep are necessary to produce the kind of wool that makes the best Navajo blankets and rugs. As part of its animal fiber studies the Bureau has also developed an improved technique for comparing the cross-sections of wool and fur fibers under the microscope, to determine their relative fineness and variability.

"The Angora breed of goats is raised largely for the mohair obtained from them, while other kinds of goats are more useful for their milk. Not long ago I reviewed the Bureau's work with milk goats. Mohair goats are raised in considerable numbers in the West and southwest. The mohair is a very useful fabric fiber, either alone or combined with other fibers. Furniture manufacturers use a lot of mohair, and light-weight men's suits are often made of it.

"We might say that the protection of human health is a considerable part of this Bureau's activities. The elimination of cattle diseases, for instance, means more wholesome meat and more of it for us to eat. Some of the protection is even more direct. The eradication of bovine tuberculosis is a safeguard to the milk supply and thus removes a definite menace to human health. Studies of animal parasites that are also injurious to man include trichinae in pork and some other kinds of worm parasites.

"On the economic side the Bureau protects the food purse by seeing that labels on meat and meat food products tell all the necessary facts truthfully. Added substances must be declared. Certain substances are never permitted in meat products prepared under U. S. inspection.

"This concludes a thumb-nail sketch of the work of a very large bureau insofar as it is of special interest to women. Later there will be details on some of these activities."

That's all of this week's Washington letter.

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